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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENTATION TO THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SUBJECT: Air Force, Fixed-Wing Tactical and Training Aircraft Programs

STATEMENT OF:

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Wittman, Ranking Member Norcross, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for having us here today to provide testimony on The Department of the Air Force's Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) President's Budget (PB) request for fixed-wing tactical and training aircraft programs.

The United States Air Force is critical our national defense. Our capabilities underwrite the entirety of the joint force, and we are uniquely suited to provide this cornerstone of the Nation's defense.

The Department of the Air Force's FY24 PB request is guided by the seven operational imperatives we must meet to win in the future fight which Secretary Kendall and General Brown outlined last year. Our budget request reflects our commitment to developing a threat-informed, concept-driven future Air Force. We have made significant progress in identifying the capabilities the Air Force will need to develop and field to prevail against our adversaries.

The Air Force is grateful for congressional support in FY23, which allowed us to continue our pursuit of the critical warfighting capabilities needed to deter our adversaries and prevail in combat. As we continue to modernize or recapitalize our older fighter, tanker, cargo, and command and control aircraft, we are eager for continued collaboration with Congress, industry, and the communities that support our Air Bases to ensure our Nation's security.

CURRENT CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

In line with the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) guidance on future force design, the Air Force seeks to invest in technologies and field systems that are both lethal and survivable against tomorrow's threats. Our greatest weapon system is the more than 333,000 Airmen and Guardians who proudly wear our uniforms. A critical need in transitioning to the high-end fight is assigning experienced pilots, maintainers, munitions specialists and support personnel to receive and operate the new platforms as they arrive at our bases. Ultimately, this means transitioning away from many legacy capabilities to free up manpower and resources to modernize and field more capable systems. We must modernize to address the emerging threat, this requires pivoting resources from our legacy platforms and weapons systems that are decreasing in relevance today and will be irrelevant in the future. Retaining systems that have either limited contributions, or are simply not relevant in the future fight, delays modernization

and exacerbates future capability gaps by consuming limited resources, especially manpower. If deterrence fails, our Airmen must have the training, tools, platforms, and operating systems required to win.

Fighter Force Structure

The Air Force must continue to evolve its fighter force to meet the pacing challenge posed by China and the acute threat posed by Russia and ensure the capability and capacity to meet worldwide demands today. Extensive wargaming and analysis show that TACAIR modernization is critical to provide the Joint Force with the capability and capacity needed to deter and prevail against future aggression. The threat will not allow the Air Force to pause in place. We have critical investments across the 4th, 5th, and 6th generation fleet to meet the pacing challenge.

In realistic budget projections, we must balance the need for high end technology with affordable capacity. To attain a fighter fleet that matches capability and capacity of platforms and weapons to mission requirements, the Air Force is transitioning our fighter fleet from seven platforms (F-35, F-22, F-16, F-15EX, F-15E, F-15C, A-10) to four platforms (NGAD, F-35, F-15EX, F-16). Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) & F-35 Block 4 are required to address the most challenging missions assigned to the fighter force

On the path to achieving the desired future fighter fleet, the FY24 President's Budget procures 72 fighter aircraft in FY24, the largest single year fighter procurement since 1991. Divestment of legacy systems is critical to building a relevant future force capable of addressing the Department's pacing challenge. Resourcing those future capabilities and modernizing our remaining force demands both money and manpower currently tied up in our legacy systems and platforms. To transition fighter resources to a modernized, lethal force, the FY24 budget proposes a net change of minus 89 fighter aircraft in FY24, and a total FYDP net change of minus 425 fighter aircraft.

Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD)

The NGAD Family of Systems is vital for securing air superiority for the U.S. Air Force. The NGAD Family of Systems will replace the F-22 in the Air Force Future Fighter Force Structure. Funds garnered from the divestment of F-22 Block-20s have been reinvested in NGAD development across the FYDP. The transition timeline from F-22 to NGAD is dependent

on the progress of NGAD development efforts. The NGAD Family of Systems consists of the NGAD crewed platform, uncrewed Collaborative Combat Aircraft, the Agile Mission Suite open architecture, and advanced mission systems. Analyses, development, and prototyping within the NGAD program leads to enhancements in survivability, lethality, persistence, and interoperability. The NGAD crewed fighter platform enables counter-air missions in highly contested environments, thwarting advances in enemy anti-access capabilities, and allowing the joint force to seize and exploit the initiative. This new fighter will field novel technologies that could change the way we fight but, more importantly, it will have the ability to rapidly adapt to emerging technologies and threats to keep pace with our adversaries. The Air Force ensures cost control on NGAD by driving continuous competition for air vehicles, mission systems, software, and by mandating the use of a government-owned reference architecture. We are also changing the way we execute highly complex acquisition programs by taking a hands-on approach to digital engineering that accelerates prototyping, drives efficiencies in manufacturing, and reduces costs in operations and sustainment. The FY24 PB requests $1.93 billion in FY24 to fund aircraft design, development, test, and integration of advanced mission systems, cooperative development of the government's Agile Mission Suite open architecture, and rapid software development to enable cutting-edge electronic warfare and communications techniques.

Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA)

While the NGAD crewed fighter will give us an exquisite edge, it will be unaffordable to purchase these in sufficient quantities to provide the necessary mass on a threat-relevant timeline. CCA provide affordable and capable mass by teaming with the NGAD crewed platform as well as numerous other current and future generation platforms across the joint force. CCA development unites the parallel disciplines of autonomy and low-cost air vehicle construction previously funded under Air Force Research Laboratory's (AFRL) Skyborg Vanguard program. We have learned a great deal through analysis and experimentation in the Skyborg program, and in our ongoing concept refinement studies. The FY24 PB requests $392 million for competitive concept refinement, design, and development of a first-generation CCA. Additionally, we request $119 million to fund supporting activities that will accelerate platform-agnostic autonomy development, and explore the optimal operations, maintenance, and sustainment concepts for these novel platforms. Our extensive analyses show that CCA are a force multiplier that will allow us to achieve air superiority affordably and at scale. Continued investment in the

NGAD Family of Systems will ensure our ability to secure the air against proliferating threats to support future joint operations anytime, anywhere.

F-35

The F-35 is the cornerstone of our future fighter fleet and we have fielded nearly 400 F-35As to date. In the near-term, we must concentrate on achieving the F-35 capability needed for advanced threats. While the F-35 is a formidable platform today, the Air Force must confront key development, interoperability, sustainability, and affordability challenges to acquire, upgrade, and retrofit the F-35A fleet to obtain the minimum required capability and capacity as quickly as possible within projected resource constraints. First flight in a Technical Refresh – 3 (TR-3) configuration occurred earlier this year and is the foundation for Block 4. Block 4 modernization with TR-3 hardware ensures F-35 relevance in the high-end fight against China or Russia in 2025 and beyond.

The FY24 PB requests 48 F-35A aircraft, an increase of five aircraft from the FY23 enacted position. The Air Force is prioritizing investments in the F-35 fleet, seeking modernization, infrastructure, and advanced weapons in this budget request. Commitments include $6.0 billion in procurement, $1.3 billion in development and $2.3 billion to fund necessary sustainment. This increased investment ensures maximum future viability of the fleet. Propulsion and cooling development investments contained in the FY24 PB request will help ensure capability enhancements will continue to be viable for the platform while also reducing lifetime sustainment costs.

The Air Force continues to make progress in addressing readiness challenges with the F-35A and stand-up depot capacity to improve future sustainment. We are recovering from the F-135 MICAP issue with today only five aircraft five awaiting engines, power modules, or fan modules. The two largest sustainment cost drivers the Air Force controls are the number of aircraft possessed and programmed flying hours, and the major cost categories are parts, people, energy, and consumables. The Air Force is continuing work with the F-35 Joint Program Office, Navy, and industry to identify and evaluate opportunities to increase depot repair capacity and further reduce the cost of materiel and manpower.

The Air Force is committed to reducing F-35 costs for both production and sustainment as well as improving mission readiness. The F-35 program is additionally moving towards a

supply chain, demand reduction Performance Based Logistics (PBL) contract at the end of 2023 to prioritize availability and affordability outcomes across the F-35 enterprise. In response to the FY22 NDAA Section 142, the Air Force is working with OSD, the Department of Navy, and the F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO) to assume greater management, planning and execution roles of the F-35 sustainment functions to further reduce sustainment costs.

Advanced Engine Development

The Air Force is working with the JPO to implement the F-35 enterprise decision to move forward with the F135 Engine Core Upgrade and accompanying Power and Thermal Management System upgrade. While Operational Analysis determined that the AETP three stream adaptive cycle engines provide substantial F-35A operational performance advantages, the JPO-led BCA determined that the F135 Engine Core Upgrade will restore engine life and prevent degradation for all three F-35 variants and partner nations at the lowest cost. Data from testing of the AETP prototype adaptive cycle engines is informing design activities for the Next Generation Adaptive Propulsion (NGAP) program as are the validated advanced engine technologies. NGAP engines leverage the AETP technology suite and deliver capability enabling propulsion options for the most highly contested environments. Competitive NGAP prototyping, funded in this budget request, preserves key advanced engine design and manufacturing skills required to maintain U.S. strategic advantages in propulsion over competitors.

F-15

Our F-15C fleet is aging, with two-thirds of the fleet past its designed service life. The 179 F-15C/Ds in the Air Force inventory will reach the end of their design service life in the next five to seven years, and our analysis shows additional service life extension programs are not cost effective. The FY24 PB request divests 57 F-15C/Ds from the active fleet in FY24. We have already started to replace this fleet with a modernized successor by purchasing the F-15EX. The FY24 PB request procures 24 F-15EX aircraft and funds weapon system investment at $2.9 billion. Notably, the Air Force remains fully committed to developing advanced 5th and next generation capabilities and the F-35. The F-15EX is a complementary step to both F-35 procurement and NGAD development and helps mitigate capacity risk while balancing near-term readiness concerns.

The FY24 PB requests $406.5 million in FY24 to continue modernization efforts to ensure the F-15E Strike Eagle remains viable to the 2030s. Modernizing the F-15E with Early Passive Active Warning Survivability System (EPAWSS), also used on the F-15EX, demonstrates our commitment to building a more lethal Air Force. EPAWSS will allow the F-15E/EX to survive to attack targets in high threat environments.

F-16

Our more than 600 post block F-16s will provide affordable capacity for the next 15 or more years, in both competition and more permissive combat environments. We are beginning to transition away from our oldest, early block F-16s, with a reduction of 49 planned through FY25. We will continue to modernize the late block F-16s we keep as our "affordable capacity" fighter into the 2040s. The F-16 investment strategy funds modifications for the most capable, late block aircraft to ensure they can operate and survive in today's threat environment. The FY24 PB requests $405.32 million in FY24 to continue these modernization efforts. This includes continuing the Service Life Extension Program comprising 12 structural modifications, affecting 450 aircraft, as well as several avionics capability upgrades including the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar upgrade. The new radar replaces the current mechanically scanned radar, with greater ability to detect, track, and identify low-observable, low-flying, and slow-flying targets. This Joint Emerging Operational Need (JEON) of 72 radar systems is complete and fielded. The underway Phase 3 will install a total of 443 radar systems across the Combat Air Force (CAF), Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), and Air National Guard (ANG), bringing critical capabilities to the F-16 platform to meet aerospace control alert mission requirements to properly defend the homeland against modern threats. These radars continue fielding in FY24.

F-22

F-22 Block-20s are now in their third decade and have the highest operating costs of any Air Force fighter. They are not combat representative, meaning they do not possess the combat capabilities resident in the F-22 Block-30/35. Remaining committed to ensuring air superiority for the Joint Force in the highly contested environment against a peer adversary, it is imperative to modernize the F-22 to preserve its advantages while concurrently developing NGAD. To resource both F-22 modernization and NGAD, the Air Force maintains our FY23 position to divest the oldest and least capable F-22s (32 F-22 Block-20s) in FY24. In the near term, three

heavily modified F-22 Block-20s will be kept for testing. Additionally, the FY24 PB request includes $1.62 billion in FY24 for modernization efforts essential to gain and maintain air superiority against evolving threats. The Rapid Prototyping and Rapid Fielding efforts follow an agile acquisition construct and combine former TacLink16 and Tactical Mandates (TACMAN), Low Drag Tanks & Pylons, Electronic Protection, and GPS M-code programs to deliver slices of each capability on an annual release cadence for capabilities as they mature. Future modernizations will continue to leverage the agile construct as a vehicle to rapidly prototype and iteratively field critical enhancements with capabilities delivered to the fleet in order to ensure "first look, first shot, first kill" capability in highly contested environments. Funds garnered from the divestment of F-22 Block-20s have been reinvested in NGAD development across the FYDP. The transition timeline from F-22 to NGAD is dependent on the progress of NGAD development efforts.

A-10

In the FY24 PB request the Air Force seeks to continue the drawdown of the A-10 fleet by divesting a total of 42 A-10s in FY24. Aircraft will come from Davis-Monthan AFB (-36) and Moody AFB (-6). A controlled drawdown will allow the Air Force to continue transitioning its fighter fleet and maintenance personnel to an advanced force capable of defeating the threats outlined in the National Defense Strategy and National Security Strategy. Failure to execute the A-10 divestment as planned will inject unacceptable risk to the Air Force's ability to deter or defeat a peer adversary.

Trainers

T-7A

The T-7A Advanced Pilot Trainer replaces AETC's existing fleet of 422 T-38C aircraft with 351 aircraft and associated simulators, ground equipment, spares, and support equipment. The T-7A will provide student pilots with the skills and competencies required to be better prepared to transition into 4th and 5th generation fighter and bomber aircraft. The T-7A program was designed for the Air Force using a digital engineering approach, which offers significant benefits particularly during the design and build phases. Digital engineering reduces development times, lowers production costs, and allows greater collaboration between the Air Force and industry in the development and production of the initial T-7 prototypes. Embracing modern digital engineering practices reduced design costs, reduced production support

manpower, improved first time quality by 75%, and reduced assembly hours by 80% through task reduction. The FY24 PB request continues the program's Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) and early aircraft flight test efforts, ensuring we meet the 2027 Initial Operational Capability and 2036 Full Operational Capability milestones. Rollout of the first EMD T-7A occurred in April 2022 and First Flight is anticipated in 2023. The Air Force is working with Boeing to enable the T-7A program to achieve Milestone C in 2QFY25. While these dates are later than the initially proposed milestones for T-7, they represent realistic and achievable timelines which can sustain our training capability through the T-38 to the T-7 transition.

T-1, T-6, and T-38

The Air Force is continuing investment efforts in its trainer platforms, including critical modernization programs for the T-6 and T-38 fleets. The T-1A fleet is scheduled for divestment between FY23 and FY26. Training of future Mobility pilots, currently being conducted in the T-1A aircraft, will be accomplished in the T-1A simulators using procedures developed from the Pilot Training Next Innovation Cell at Air Education and Training Command (AETC). The T-6 continues mitigation efforts for the aircraft with the On-Board Oxygen Generation System (OBOGS) to improve the safety of pilot training and address Unexplained Physiological Events (UPEs). To date, mitigation efforts have resulted in an 82% reduction in UPEs. Expected completion of Enhanced OBOGS mitigation efforts is mid-FY24. In FY23, the T-6 will start a major Avionics Replacement Program (ARP) to address Diminishing Manufacturing Sources and Material Shortages (DMSMS) for critical avionics issues. For the T-38, modifications are also required to sustain and upgrade the fleet until the T-7A delivers, including avionics, Pacer Classic III, Talon Repair, Inspections, Maintenance, and front canopy replacement programs. The FY24 PB requests $14.3 million, $39.7 million, and $129.8 million for the T-1, T-6, and T-38 fleets, respectively.

Munitions

Extensive wargaming and analysis demonstrate that the Air Force requires an affordable mix of both air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons that can deliver the capacity and capability needed to maintain a competitive advantage over the pacing challenge. The FY24 PB request modernizes munitions and directly supports and influences the DAF's seven Operational Imperatives.

The Air Force shaped its investments based on the optimal mix of munitions, aligned with current OSD and Joint Staff planning guidance. In FY24, the Air Force is focused on critical high performance, standoff, and precision strike weapons to deliver munitions with increased range and precision effects in contested environments against high-value targets. The Air Force made investments to expand production capacity, procure munitions at favorable economic rates, and strengthen the industrial base. The munitions portfolio includes three new multi-year procurement programs, which aim to maximize weapon production efficiency with a buy-to-budget procurement approach. The Air Force will continue to collaborate with partner nations and the Navy to share cost and technology; this partnership is critical in countering naval air defense threats. The FY24 PB request for Norway's Joint Strike Missile represents such a partnership to procure an operational long range, air-to-surface, precision guided survivable system that enables the U.S. to hold maritime targets at risk in contested environments and increases our maritime strike capacity. The Air Force continues to respond to current operational demands and ensuring we are prepared to defend against more advanced threats. Doing so requires advanced weapons capabilities and the FY24 PB request reflects the Air Force's plan to continue investing in those areas, specifically with the Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missiles (JASSM), Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM), and the Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM). These weapons provide unique and necessary capabilities for the highly contested environment.

JASSM

JASSM is the premier air-to-ground, low observable missile for defeating threats in highly contested environments and is the weapon of choice for a future fight against peer adversaries. Through the use of multi-year procurement authority, the Air Force requests $1.6 billion in FY24 that includes an economic order quantity to increase inventory and ramp up to maximize production rates. Additionally, the President's Budget requests $77 million in facilitization funding, which increases the JASSM production line from 550 to a capability to produce 810 missiles per year in FY26.

LRASM

LRASM, produced in the same facility as JASSM, is a Navy developed purpose-built anti-ship missile particularly critical for the future fight in a maritime environment. The FY24 PB requests $188 million to procure 27 missiles and increases LRASM procurement in the future

years defense program by utilizing Multi-year procurement authority. Included in the Navy's FY24 PB request is a $53 million facilitization request to increase LRASM production from 120 to a capability to produce 240 missiles per year in FY26.

AMRAAM

The Air Force also leverages Multi-year procurement authority in its FY24 PB request for AMRAAM as we continue to invest in the next generation medium and long-range air-to-air missiles. AMRAAM continues to be the Air Force's premier beyond visual range, all weather, launch and leave medium range air-to-air missile. The Air Force is requesting $701 million for 457 missiles, which includes an economic order quantity that supports the Multi-year procurement strategy to maximize production capacity through the future years defense program.

Stand-In Attack Weapon (SiAW)

The Air Force continues to invest in technology to counter future peer threats. Continued development of the Stand-in Attack Weapon (SiAW) delivers a strike capability to defeat rapidly relocatable targets, a hallmark of the highly contested environment. SiAW is the munition that gives the F-35 unique air-to-surface capabilities in the high-end fight for the Joint Force. The FY24 PB requests $298 million for SiAW development and prototyping, along with $42 million in procurement funding to field Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile Extended Range (AARGM-ER) on the F-35 as an interim capability.

Hypersonic Systems

Hypersonics are being designed to rapidly overcome the tyranny of distance in the Pacific and enable the U.S. to hold high value, time-sensitive targets at risk in contested environments from standoff distances within the region. When integrated with the broader munitions portfolio, their cost and complexity make hypersonic weapons a high-end, low volume capability, yet, in concert with a wider weapon force mixture, are key to providing a war-winning force.

HACM

The FY24 PB request of $382 million for the Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile (HACM) development allows the Air Force to mature HACM to critical design, continue model-based engineering activities, mature the digital ecosystem to complete critical design analysis, design verification testing, execute initial qualification testing, procure initial flight test

hardware, build aircraft integration assets, mature Weapon Open Systems Architecture (WOSA) compliance evaluations, prepare for flight test in FY25 and enable production article procurement by FY27.

ARRW (AGM-183A)

The FY24 PB requests $150.3 million of Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding to complete the Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon (ARRW) AGM-183A rapid prototyping program. While the Air Force does not currently intend to pursue follow-on procurement of ARRW once the prototyping program concludes, there is inherent benefit to completing the All-Up Round (AUR) Test Flights (ATFs) to garner the learning and test data that will help inform future hypersonic programs and, potential leave behind capability support.

Rotorcraft

CV-22

The CV-22 is the Air Force variant of the joint V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft. It allows for long-distance, terrain following, vertical lift operations with increased survivability and is the only high-speed vertical lift platform in the Air Force inventory. The FY24 PB requests $175.1 million to continue modifications to increase CV-22 fleet reliability, capability, and survivability. Investments in these areas will ensure the CV-22 fleet remains ready, reliable, and relevant in the future.

HH-60G and HH-60W (Combat Rescue Helicopter)

The Air Force is the only Service with a dedicated force organized, trained, and equipped to execute theater-wide Personnel Recovery. The HH-60G fleet currently accomplishes this mission by conducting day, night, and marginal weather Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) operations to recover isolated personnel in hostile or permissive environments. The HH-60W will replace the SH-60F in this role. To date, Congress has provided resources to procure 85 HH-60W, which is sufficient capacity for the missions envisioned for this force. No additional HH-60 aircraft were requested in the FY24 PB. The FY24 PB requests $4.2 million and $330.8 million for the HH-60G and HH-60W programs, respectively.

MH-139A

The MH-139A program is a critical element of the Air Force nuclear enterprise reform initiative and also supports operational airlift within the National Capital Region. This program

will deliver up to 80 replacement helicopters, training devices, and associated support equipment to replace the legacy UH-1Ns. The FY24 PB requests $274.9 million for the MH-139 program, which will fund Low-Rate Initial Production for seven aircraft, training devices, and support equipment. It also funds the MH-139A Performance Enhancements and Product Improvements Program, which is the development of solutions to provide capability issues identified during the development and test of the MH-139A. This includes solving communication and weapon systems challenges, improving mission planning compatibility, resolving usability concerns, and other critical capabilities. The first six aircraft continue to be used to finalize test and development, while producing the first Low-Rate Initial Production lot of 13 aircraft procured in FY23.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

The Air Force is focusing Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) resources on efforts that provide high quality tracking and target coordinates, establish meaningful data nodes to give tactical direction, and optimize weapon systems with information that matters in the most useful formats, at speed and scale. To meet the challenges of a highly contested environment, the future ISR portfolio will consist of a multi-domain, multi-intelligence, collaborative sensing grid that uses advanced technology. The end goal is a ready Next Generation ISR Enterprise possessing a decisive advantage for the warfighter while remaining competent across the entire spectrum of conflict.

The ability to win future high-end conflicts requires accelerating investment to transition our ISR force structure into a connected, persistent, and survivable force. To achieve this, we must move away from expensive legacy systems that offer limited capability against future competitors. The FY24 President's Budget request takes further steps towards repurposing, retooling, automating, and stabilizing the force to ensure the ISR Enterprise can achieve this vision within the next decade.

MQ-9

The FY24 PB request of $178.7 million will continue MQ-9 fleet modernization efforts aimed at providing needed capabilities to the Combatant Commands. To date the MQ-9 fleet has flown over three million hours, with the vast majority of those hours supporting combat

operations. This level of warfighter support is facilitated by an agile acquisition strategy, creating flexibility to quickly add new requirements.

The Air Force continues to right-size the fleet for current requirements, while focusing on future priorities. The FY24 PB request continues removal of 250 aircraft from the inventory from FY23-27. In FY24, the remaining 48 MQ-9 Block 1 aircraft will be divested from the fleet and finalize transfer of 10 aircraft to the Marine Corps. The Air Force will remove high time Block 5 aircraft between FY26 and FY27. The remaining fleet of 140 Block 5 aircraft will continue to meet the required force offering.

MQ-9 modernization efforts include the continued development of MQ-9 Multi-Domain Operations (M2DO) capability upgrades that will keep the fleet relevant. Upgrades in the M2DO configuration include Anti-jam GPS, Command and Control Resiliency, Enhanced Power, Link-16, and an effective and reliable open systems architecture.

RQ-4

The RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft system provides high altitude, long endurance, all weather, wide area reconnaissance and surveillance. The FY24 PB request of $1 million will maximize Block 40 utility through the remainder of the Global Hawk service life and maintain its ISR capabilities.

The Air Force plans to divest Block 40 in FY27, as we continue to develop space-based Ground Moving Target Indicator (GMTI) to meet Combatant Commander's needs in accordance with the NDS. The reduced investment in the RQ-4 also enables the Department to better align resources with the NDS.

EC-37B COMPASS CALL

COMPASS CALL is the Air Force's only wide-area, standoff, Airborne Electromagnetic Attack (AEA) Command and Control Warfare/Information Operations weapon system. The COMPASS CALL program is currently undergoing a re-host effort to transition the capability from the EC-130H to the EC-37B in order to maintain U.S. Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS) Superiority in future conflicts. Ten EC-37B aircraft have been procured, to date, and are at various stages of modification, with limited fielding for training only in FY25, and initial operational fielding in FY26.

With the FY24 PB, the Air Force will be focused on continuing Developmental and Operational Test for the rehosted EC-37B capability, as well as continuing development of the mission system upgrade for the fielding of System Wide Open Reconfigurable Dynamic Architecture (SWORD-A) capabilities. The open and agile architecture of SWORD-A will enable a more rapid response capability against emerging threats and will be included on aircraft number six through ten initially and then to the first five aircraft as an upgrade modification.

E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)

Despite modernization efforts, the aging E-3 AWACS offers limited operational utility in contested conflicts. The FY24 PB includes a resourced plan to replace the E-3 expeditiously to address this capability gap. Pursuant to the FY23 NDAA, the Air Force begins divesting the first 13 E-3 AWACS aircraft in FY23. This fleet reduction allows the Air Force to concentrate resources and improve E-3 aircraft availability rates, while efforts to procure E-7A are underway. Full fleet divestment is currently scheduled to occur by FY29; therefore, most E-3 modernization programs are being terminated except mandated requirements for crypto and communication systems as well as safety of flight efforts. Keeping any number of the E-3s beyond the current DAF plan will not change the capability to address the "bathtub" because of the increasing sustainment and readiness challenges. The FY24 PB request divests two E-3s in FY24 reducing the fleet from 18 E-3s in FY23 to 16 E-3s by the end of FY24. The FY24 PB request of $1.35 million funds these efforts to maintain existing AWACS Battle Management and Command and Control capabilities.

E-7A

The E-7A program replaces the E-3 AWACS. It will enable the long range kill chain by delivering the ability to detect and track highly maneuverable, small radar cross-section airborne targets (modern and emerging threats); enabling greater airborne battlespace awareness with its precise, real-time air picture of sufficient quality to control and direct individual aircraft under a wide range of environmental and operational conditions. It will also mitigate reliability, operational availability, maintainability, and sustainability issues. These enhancements are made possible by state-of-the-art radar capabilities including beam steering, sector staring, and much faster target revisit rates that translate into better target detection and tracking of modern threats, as well as more robust Electronic Protection not possible with the mechanically scanned radar on the E-3 AWACS. The FY24 PB requests funds to continue the rapid prototyping of the E-7A

weapon system. Rapid prototyping includes development efforts to ensure compliance with US cyber security and program protection standards; development efforts to ensure navigation and communication systems comply with GPS M-Code and Narrowband SATCOM mandates; design and build-out of contractor and government System Integration Laboratories supporting development, integration, and test activities, and provide analysis and products supporting future requirements and airworthiness certification. The FY24 PB request of $681 million funds these continued efforts to develop the first two E-7A aircraft.

Connecting the Joint Force

The Air Force continues to work closely with the other services, the Joint Staff, and OSD to drive implementation of Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2). The Department of the Air Force established a new PEO for Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (C3BM), which is leading the integration of command and control and battle management functions across the Department of the Air Force to ensure our planned capabilities deliver the C2 capabilities supporting the joint force. The cornerstone of this effort is the DAF BATTLE NETWORK, including the Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS), which creates decision advantage by delivering critical information and capabilities to warfighters and operators at multiple echelons.

Operationally optimized ABMS/JADC2 is one of the Secretary of the Air Force's operational imperatives and is foundational to many other operational imperatives. Within the ABMS portfolio, DAF PEO C3BM is pursuing multiple interconnected investments: digital infrastructure, aerial networking, software and applications, and architecture and systems engineering focusing on closing the right kill chains and delivering near-term operational capability. The Architecture and Systems Engineering (ASE) team within DAF PEO C3BM drives mission integration to enable warfighter capabilities for resilient decision advantage. Its primary product is engineering data to drive decisions on effective and efficient integration of the DAF BATTLE NETWORK across the Joint Force. DAF PEO C3BM is working as the Integrating PEO to ensure Air Force and Space Force systems have seamless interoperability and compatibility to meet the JADC2 concept.

Driven by strategic requirements approved by the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations, DAF PEO C3BM has identified DAF BATTLE NETWORK core and connected programs across the acquisition community, while also

continuing to execute the ABMS portfolio. The FY24 PB request of $500.6M will enable ABMS to remain on track to deliver initial capabilities such as the Cloud-Based Command and Control (CBC2) tactical C2 software to multiple Air Defense Sectors, as well as multiple digital infrastructure efforts for software-defined wide area networking and deployable edge solutions for battle management teams at multiple echelons.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with this subcommittee to ensure the Department of the Air Force maintains the necessary military advantage to secure our vital national interests and support our allies and partners in Fiscal Year 2024 and beyond.